

How can I find Significance?

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[0:00] My theme is significance or can anything good come out of such as me tonight?! John 1 verse 46 really starts us off on that theme. John 1 verse 46 says in the context Philip finds! Nathanael tells how he found him.

! Jesus of the context. of Nazareth. And verse 46 and Nathanael said unto him unto Philip, can there anything good, any good thing, come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him come and see. I'd like to use this as a bit of a springboard for us to think about for ourselves. Can anything good come out of our life? How can I qualify to be used of God?

God. It's telling us here as Nathanael asked Philip, can there any good thing, can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Now Nazareth was a small city and some reckon it had a bit of a bad reputation.

It wasn't some big flash place. It was an obscure out of the way kind of place. insignificant, insignificant, little. They reckon its population was maybe 100, 400 people, if that.

[1:30] And the view was nothing good ever came out of Nazareth. That's what people thought. That's what they said. It wasn't well thought of. It was a place many held it in contempt. It was a mean place. Obscure, poor.

Some even said it was a wicked place. People told stories about the place. It was a place that had a prejudice against it. Now that's how some people view Elizabeth, isn't it? Can anything good come out of Elizabeth?

Can anything good come out of Salisbury? You know, whatever it be. I know we were witnessing down south on Saturday and the one who organised the event chose Hakim. They said, oh, that's like the southern Elizabeth, Hakim.

Can anything good come out of Hakim? Well, I'm going to tell you tonight, two people got saved at Hakim. Amen? Because we reached out and gave them the gospel. And some people would say, can anything good come out of Elizabeth?

Maybe God places us in an out-of-the-way kind of place. And he can use us there, can't he? It doesn't matter where we come from, where we're living, where we're from. And someone wrote this. It was a kind of a question someone posed of God.

[2:49] Father, where shall I work today? And my love flowed warm and free. Then he pointed out a tiny spot and said, tend that for me.

I answered quickly, oh no, not that. Why, no one would ever see. No matter how well my work was done. Not that little place for me. And the word he spoke, it was not stern. He answered me tenderly, ah, little ones, search that heart of thine. Art thou working for them or me?

Nazareth was a little place and so was Galilee." End quote. It says it all, doesn't it, really? I know I was thinking lately, I met some preacher man who's serving in the ski fields of Victoria, a place called Mount Beauty. And it's a tiny little place, isn't it? Apparently Mount Beauty, most of the year it's very quiet. It's a small kind of place, a small country town. And then they have the influx of all the people coming for the snow season.

But here was a man faithfully serving in this little country town, come over from the USA, and he's serving here in this little obscure country town. And you think, well, he's not ever going to have a mega church there. And you think, but he's faithfully serving, he's faithfully serving in the little place. In the good for nothing place, some would think, like a place like Nazareth.

And who came from Nazareth? Of course, our Lord came from Nazareth, didn't he? That was where he grew up. This little place. Who is Jesus? Jesus of Nazareth. That was what they called him. And we think of our Lord today, where he came from, what it means. It tells of him, he is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we heard, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not. It says he came unto his

own and his own received him not. They just said no. You get that, don't you, when you tell someone the good news, the gospel. No. Don't want to hear it. He is one rejected still, isn't he? He's still rejected, still today. But to the believer, he is truly precious, he has great worth. In his humility, he rode a donkey through the gates.

[5:14] And it says of him, 1 Peter 2 verse 7, unto you, therefore which believe, he is precious. But unto them which be disobedient, he's the stone which the builders disallowed. The same has made the head of the corner. He's that chief cornerstone.

The Lord Jesus came as the friend of sinners, didn't he? Friend of publicans and sinners. They used that as a way to mock him, to deride him. And really, he's that one who cares with the publicans and sinners. People like Zacchaeus. Can they get Zacchaeus up in the tree? The Lord Jesus identified with the little people. And he was their friend, wasn't he? And you know, human nature is, sometimes we can kind of rate people or scale people, can't we? They're kind of better class than others. And we can downgrade certain people or discount certain people. People might have done that with Zacchaeus.

He's a little man. He's just a, and he's a bit of a problem. He's taking all our tax money as the tax collector that he was. But the Lord Jesus noticed, he took the time and the trouble to scale the tree, to be able to look above the crowd as this little man that he was. And the Lord Jesus identified with little people like Zacchaeus. He said, come, I'm going to have a meal at your place. And really, we're all the same. It doesn't matter where we hail from or what our culture or background is. And you know, sometimes, I know for numbers of us, English is not our first language. I know Australian is not my first language. I grew up in the UK and I had to get rid of that terrible English accent that I had. I'm still getting there. But you know, it doesn't matter where we hail from, does it? No matter what our culture, no matter what our background. Yet some people treat people with disregard, don't they? And this was one person disregarded, discounted, overlooked, even shunned.

Yet our Lord did not make this distinction. And it's the same for you and me, as we're brothers and sisters from many different cultures and countries, some from the original inhabitants of Australia, and some from other multiplied countries all across the world. And we've all got the same value in God's sight, haven't we? The Lord Jesus, think of him. He even esteemed Roman soldiers with faith. He esteemed them. And he recognised and praised even the Samaritans. They were hated. He touched and he blessed and he healed the lepers, the outcasts, the ones who others would disregard and overlook.

[8:00] We read the Bible says, do not despise the day of small things. Don't despise that day. Our Lord praises those with the faith as of a grain of mustard seed, as small as a mustard seed.

Matthew 17, 20 talks about if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed. You can move a mountain. Think of that. We can think of ourselves, well, my faith's pretty small. I'm pretty weak. I'm a pretty, you know, insignificant kind of Christian. Who am I? That God would use me. That God would even save me.

But yet, God, here's your cry. And it's good to make that real evaluation. Who's despised the day of small things? Where is true value? Where is it found? Consider the value of one soul, one single soul. One. It's worth the great expense of great importance. More value than the whole world is one soul. That precious soul. Even it could be someone you might overlook or discount. You might think they're of less value for whatever reason. You might rate people, which we know we shouldn't rate people.

We should be not a respecter of persons like God, our Lord. Because one soul is of immense value. The little ones in the Sunday school, some would say, oh, they kind of don't count. They're a fraction of an adult. But no, they're an adult. They're a soul. They're a living, immortal soul. And they're precious. Precious. God places a priority here on people. Every one of us. Every one of you. And God uses the lowly too. Right through the word we see. God uses the nobodies. He kind of picks them out and he chooses them. The commoners, the unknown. Look at who he chose. Look at who he chose. He didn't go to the universities to find his disciples, did he? He went down to the beach. He went down to the shore. And he chose for his representatives upon earth. He chose from amongst the fishermen and the tax collectors. Not the people well regarded. They had no credentials to lay claim to. And it tells of them in Acts 4.13, now when they saw the boldness of

Peter and John, they perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men. They marveled and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

[10:21] Think of it. Where our Lord went to pick up those that would be the forefront of his ministry, of his church, that he left to take his ministry forward. God chooses from amongst the humble, the lowly, the meek, the weak. And that way there was never any question about who was working about the source of power. It wasn't them. Yet their lives God touched to use to change the world. Notice what made the difference? They had been with Jesus. They had been with Jesus. And friends, our Lord is looking for the God-fearing. And he's finding them amongst the ordinary, everyday people. He always has. Consider the unknowns, the unlikely, the unqualified, the unworthy. They're right through the word of God.

It's from amongst their ranks that we see the true heroes of the faith. Consider for some examples here tonight. For example, Moses. Consider Moses. It tells of Moses, now the man Moses, this is Numbers 12, verse 3. Consider Moses. Moses was very meek or humble. He was meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth. Moses, the most humble man, the most meek man upon the face of the earth.

Moses was no big shot. He was no show off. And he was small enough that God could use him as his faithful servant. As the Lord describes him, my servant Moses. That's the greatest privilege, isn't it?

That you and I, you can be called my servant, he says to you. You can be called my servant. My servant. My servant Moses, who is faithful in all mine house. Here was Moses living on the back side of the desert.

He was a total failure as the prince of Egypt. And God called him to deliver a nation. Moses tried to talk God out of it. In Exodus 4, verse 10, Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant. But I am slow of speech and of slow tongue. He said, I'm not eloquent. I'm not articulate. I'm slow of speech. I'm slow of tongue.

[12:38] But God knows what he's doing. He needs a man, a woman, small enough to get out of the way and let God have his way. In your life, in mine, you might say, oh, I'm not eloquent. We can think of all kinds of excuses. Why not? No, you've got the wrong, you're picking the wrong one here. I'm not the man you're looking for. And he tried to pass it on, as we know, to Aaron to speak on his behalf. And we read Exodus 4, verses 11 through 12, The Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? Or maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. God uses the humble. God uses you as you humble yourself. God will use you as you see your inadequacy, as you see your lack. As one preacher puts it, this is DL Moody, he said, Be humble or you'll stumble. Be humble or you'll stumble. You know, if we get too inflated with our own self-worth, we know we can get in the way of God. The Lord finds his workmen not amongst the esteemed and the proud, but amongst the lowly. There's many examples. What about Gideon? Can you think of anyone less qualified than Gideon? God found Gideon hiding in a hole, fearful of the Midianites.

He was acting like a coward, hiding from the enemy. And the angel of the Lord comes to him in Judges chapter 6, Judges chapter 6 verse 12, and it reads, And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. Can you imagine as the angel said that, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. You're probably looking, who's he talking to?

Now here he was in this hole in the ground trying to hide, you know, hide from the enemies and just sort of doing a bit of threshing of wheat, whatever he was doing. But he was kind of hiding. And the angel says, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.

I wonder what Gideon's self-talk was like, as he was thinking, well, he can't be talking to me. He must have got the wrong address here. I'm afraid, I'm not able. And it says, as we read on, the Lord said unto him, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have

was a poor man he's a little boy just a shepherd a lowly place god's pattern is to search out in the lowly places his plan is to search out the humble the unlikely and to call them to serve him and david showed love and care for the discounted as well think of how david treated mephibosheth as the surviving one of saul's line he took the trouble and the care to lay food on his table for this lame man mephibosheth another one who people might have discounted or overlooked you know sometimes we you know humanly we can be like that can't we when someone might have a disability or some lack of this or that they can be overlooked and discounted having worked in disability in the disability field for a while it really opened my eyes to that and we need to have that thought well they've got feelings and they've got emotions and and they've got understanding even though we don't always catch what understanding they do have and they're valuable every soul is valuable every soul that some would discount the mephibosheth wouldn't they they wouldn't put a mephibosheth around their table but we need to have the heart of david and have that care of david for those that others would discount and overlook what about as many others we could talk of for example nehemiah is one he was living in persia miles away from israel in complete obscurity serving as a cup bearer he was just a servant it was a lowly role again god called nehemiah all the way to the homeland of israel to rebuild the walls of jerusalem and god calls the people the men and women that he chooses and they're the most unlikely often think of paul he was an accomplice to the killing of christians an unlikely choice surely an enemy of the church and then god chose as he was saul renamed him paul interesting that the name paul means little interesting when god saved him god said your name is paul little little we might think i'm just humble little old me i'm just you know mere mere me just me don't discount yourself as not able god tells paul my strength is made perfect in weakness we know the context there of him seeking prayer for this thorn in the flesh and

he besought the lord for that and god tells him my grace is sufficient my grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is made perfect in weakness paul says most gladly therefore will i rather glory in my infirmities that the power of christ may rest upon me god uses the little people like paul be little like paul but god can use you god can use the most most unlikely the prostitute rahab imagine that surely not no she would be totally one that would never have any place but no god had a place for rahab and even more so that she was of the line that would become the line of the messiah the prostitute rahab imagine that ruth she wasn't a woman who had some great position ruth she did not come from some famous godly family ruth was a widow from an enemy nation no prospects childless what's more she was from moab moab of all places a place and a people that the israelites frowned upon yet god used ruth again to be one who would bear the lion of the messiah then consider young mary herself as mother of the messiah mary was a teenage girl living in nazareth oh that place oh she's from nazareth when god called her to be the mother of the messiah yes even nazareth can any good thing come out of nazareth god uses ordinary people friends be encouraged tonight don't discount yourself as as unable because you as an ordinary person can be used of god in extraordinary ways and he can choose you me even such as we even if we're from nazareth even if we're from moab even if we're from samaria even if we're a leper even if we're blind maimed sinful as sinful as can be he can choose you even if you're from nazareth and we read as paul recounts in 1 corinthians for you see your calling brethren how that not many wise men after the flesh not many mighty not many noble are called but god has chosen the foolish things the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and god has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty and the base things of the world and things which are despised have god chosen yea and things which are not to bring to naught things that are that no flesh should glory in his presence god's chosen the foolish he's chosen the weak he's chosen the base the weakest the lowest the least that no flesh should glory in his presence so answer the call tonight in hebrews chapter 11 we've got a whole long list of people they had faith that's what made the difference by faith by faith by faith by faith none of them were of themselves anything special really not really remarkable or extraordinary but we read over and over again what made the difference what made them powerful men and women was two words by faith the common thing among them was their willingness to trust the lord to believe god whatever his leading whatever they were facing and god can use the people who likewise have that faith that heart's trust yes i believe i believe jesus is my savior i trust him i know him and god can use the

[28:37] people who realize their need for christ to be preeminent like john the baptist said really a great example he says he must increase but i must decrease i love that one john 3 30. it's not your bigness that god

is looking for it's your smallness he wants you to be willing to trust him to know who he is that he is with you to love to share to serve to give to help to pray to stand to put your faith in that almighty god he is the almighty god it's his power that we can trust in god uses people little people little people every little person makes a big difference doesn't it as we get together as little people that trust in our great god and god can work through your life as you trust him what makes the difference god with us most of all we must know him because without him we can do nothing sometimes we might try in our own effort and strength as much as that might be something it's not enough is it you know as our lord tells us john 15 i am the vine ye are the branches he that abideth in me and i in him the same bringeth forth much fruit for without me you can do nothing sometimes we can try in our own vain effort and fleshly selfish attempts to please god to do do do i love how it really i know i said it before religion says do do do christ says it is done it's finished religion would say try try try try to please god try to work your way to heaven but jesus says trust trust me trust me and without me he says you can do nothing you can do nothing you must have jesus you must have jesus i pray that you know him tonight that you follow him that you trust him that your faith would grow you'd be like john the baptist he must increase i must decrease surely he can use you he can use you you might say oh i'm not eloquent i'm i'm just a boy i'm just a child i'm oh yeah i'm from the least of the tribes i'm i'm i'm just a shepherd boy or whatever it be you might say oh look i'm from wherever can anything good come out of where i'm from you know you don't know where i've come from you know can anything good come out of my life can anything good come out of nazareth can anything good come out of elizabeth can anything good come out of humble little adelaide surely god can call and use you just as he did the men and women of god for his word surely god can and he wants to he wants you to know him and to trust him to trust him to follow him your significance is christ he is everything isn't he that christ would have the preeminence may he be glorified lord we thank you for your word for the testimony of these men and women of god and yet so weak and lacking of themselves yet you gave them the value that your shed blood was given such that they could know you trust you follow you lord help us to to be in their number even if we might feel like we're just a humble fisherman smelling a fish or or just a shepherd smelling of sheep or whatever it be lord we we might say we come from this place or that and maybe that makes us less than others who come from other places lord help us not to discount what you can do with a life that is surrendered to you lord use each one pray for each one each soul gathered here tonight and each one might have that heart's trust that you are the one we can have that knowledge that just as it made the difference for all these ones by faith that we can know you are with us you are with us help us through life's journey as we walk the way the way ahead that you've set for us the way forward that we'll walk in the spirit but we'll walk in the light we'll walk in your truth and we'll know you're saving we'll know

that trust that heaven is our home and this is just a a momentary pilgrimage for the meantime lord give us the grace to see what you want us to do help us lord not to dream up excuses or find some reason why not but rather to say if god is with me then why should i not listen to his voice help us lord to do that we pray in jesus name amen thanks